



MRS. LATIFA ELIZABETH HADDON

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

نَحْمَدُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدًا خَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ

THE ISLAMIC REVIEW

VOL. XXIV.]

RABI'UL-AWWAL 1355 A.H.

JUNE 1936 A.C.

[No. 6.]

A DECLARATION

I, Wajid William George Warwick, of Hurst Park Road, London, do hereby faithfully and solemnly declare of my own free will that I worship One and Only Allah (God) alone; that I believe Muhammad to be His Messenger and Servant; that I respect equally all Prophets—Abraham, Moses, Jesus, etc.; and that I will live a Muslim life by the help of Allah.

La Ilaha Il-Allah Muhammad-ur-Rasul Allah.

(There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.)

THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

THE HONOURABLE SHEIKH MUSHIR HOSAIN KIDWAI OF
GADIA, BAR.-AT-LAW

(a) *The Qur-ānic God-idea is Superior and Unique*

A conception of a god or gods is an old one in human history. Probably it came into the minds of the very first human beings whether evolved or created, when they began to think and had some experience of life. They soon found out that though they could control animals and grow seeds, yet their command over Nature was very poor. Then they saw the Sun, the Moon and the Stars rise and set. Storms raged furiously to uproot gigantic trees: floods swelled small rivulets, and epidemics came and killed the near and dear ones in large numbers. But on the other hand they also noticed the beneficent activities of Nature—good crops, birth of children (particularly male), recovery from diseases and ailments, and so forth. This induced them to think and to argue in their own minds. Thus they began to believe that there were unseen powers and spirits which had a greater control over circumstances than they had. They grew superstitious. Whatever was strange and strong inspired awe in them. They bowed to it. Thus they began to worship big rivers, big mountains, even big trees. They attributed gods to storms, to thunder and lightning. Up to this day in India every element has a named goddess. Up to this day small-pox is considered to be a goddess by the Hindus in India, and the mass of people try to appease her to get rid of the small-pox instead of going to a physician. In order to propitiate these gods and goddesses the people offered to them, and they do the same to-day, flowers, fruits and sweets. They enchanted music. They burnt incenses: they sacrificed even their children. At places Nature-worship gave place to Star-worship. The Sun and the Moon and the big stars all

THE QUR-ÁNIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

were worshipped. Abraham, the father of the Mid-Eastern religions and of all biblical Prophets, was the first to revolt against the star-worship. The scene depicted in the Qur-án of his self-struggle is very illuminating. It is as follows :—

And thus did We show Abraham the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are sure. So when the night overshadowed him, he saw a star ; said he : Is this my Lord ? So when it set, he said : I do not love the setting ones. Then when he saw the moon rising, he said : Is this my Lord ? So when it set, he said : If my Lord had not guided me I should certainly be of the erring people. Then when he saw the sun rising, he said : Is this my Lord ? Is this the greatest ? So when it set, he said : O my people ! surely I am clear of what you set up (with Allah). Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth and I am not of the polytheists. And his people disputed with him. He said : Do you dispute with me respecting Allah ? and He has guided me indeed ; and I do not fear in any way those that you set up with Him, unless my Lord pleases ; my Lord comprehends all things in His knowledge ; will you not then mind ? And how should I fear what you have set up (with Him), while you do not fear that you have set up with Allah that for which He has not sent down to you any authority ; which then of the two parties is surer of security, if you know ? Those who believe and do not mix up their faith with iniquity, those are they who shall have the security and they are those who go aright.¹

But it was the final Prophet, the most illustrious progeny of Abraham, who dealt a death-blow to the Star, Sun, Fire and Nature-worship, when he was inspired to declare : “Allah is He Who created the heavens (the celestial bodies) and the earth, and sent down water from the clouds, then brought forth with it fruits as a sustenance for you ; and He has made ships subservient to you that they might run their course in the sea of His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you. And He has made the Sun and the Moon subservient to you pursuing their courses, and He has made subservient to you the night and the day.”²

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 6 : 76-83.

² The Holy Qur-án, 14 : 32-33.

It was further declared that not only the Sun and Moon and Rivers and Seas and Air could be utilised by man but :

Alam tarao ann'Allaha sakkhara lakum mafissamavate va ma filarze va asbaga alaikum neamahu zahiratan va batinatan (XXXI. 20). Whatever was in heavens and earth, open or concealed, was made subservient to man if he knew how to control it. Only a scientist, and that of the most modern and high standard, can realize the full import and all the implications of such Qur-ánic verses. In fact it was under the impetus of such instructions as to the capabilities and possible achievements of human intelligence that Muslims adopted means to study the laws of Nature and to master the elements—the sea, the wind, the fire, the electricity, in fact all things apparent or hidden (*zahiratan va batinatan*) in the atmosphere, on the earth or inside the earth. Considering the time when the above announcements were made, every reasonable person will be compelled to admit that such enlightenment could be only achieved by a mind inspired by none but the Author, the Cherisher and the Evolver of the Universe. Within these last thirteen centuries after the announcement was made man has progressed very very greatly ; yet if we consider all the possibilities which the above verses reveal we are far, and very far—probably thousands and thousands of years far—from accomplishing all that is implied in these verses. What wonder then that, as far as scientific impetus goes, the Muslims claim that the Qur-án is the final message from God and is certain to remain true at least for thousands of years, if not millions. Let man ponder and ponder deeply over such verses as given above with which the Qur-án is full and do all he can to bring into his subservience all that is in heavens and earth. That will engage his attention till eternity. How could any sensible man bow down before any being or thing which did not possess any capabilities of bringing even the

THE QUR-ÁNIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

mighty Sun under his subservience? Thus was ended for ever among the people with any intelligence the worship of Nature. On the contrary, serious efforts began to be made to know the laws of Nature set by One God in order to subdue Nature for man's needs and requirements. The Qur-án has, in fact, stopped for ever the worship of gods or goddesses as it has stopped the worship of Nature. One of the Qur-ánic arguments is that if there were more than One God "the whole creation would necessarily fall into confusion and be overturned by the competition of such mighty antagonists."

The Qurán says:—

Or have they taken gods from the earth who raise (the dead). If there had been in them any gods except Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorderly; therefore glory be to Allah, the Lord of the dominion, above what they attribute (to Him).¹

It is true that long before Muhammad was born there were people whose conscience and reason both had rejected the plurality of gods. Even in ancient Egypt, Unitarians were to be found, as also in Greece. The high philosophy of Vedas also culminated in one Brahma—one "Om." But really the first religious system which based itself upon the doctrine of the Unity of God was Jewish. It was Moses who preached strict Monotheism and conceived a God of high attributes. But alas! his people could only grasp the idea of a tribal King. They could only think of an exclusive God of Israelites—a tribal Sovereign. Even then they lapsed into idolatry again and again. They could believe only in an anthropomorphic God—a mighty King of their own Nation. Judaism is the one religion which has no philosophy. It claims to have based itself strictly on Law, and the Jewish people do not go beyond the letters of that Law. Therefore the Law has become too rigid. Christ came to make this rigidity a little flexible. He also came only to the

¹ The Holy Qur-án, 21 : 21—22.

Israelites and tried to divert their attention to the spirit of the Law, but they did not listen to him. Instead, they reviled him and his holy mother. They refused to have him as their prophet. They jeered at him. They could not appreciate his spirituality. They put him on the cross with a crown of thorns on his head. And his disciples, almost all of whom had proved untrustworthy, cowardly, untruthful, traitors, made a mess of his principles and preachings after him. The Christianity as known to-day has very little of the simple teachings of Christ in it. Although its foundation remains that of the old Mosaic religion ; although it recognises the Old Testament as its basis ; yet, instead of the spirit which Jesus wanted to introduce into Judaic beliefs, a very poor philosophy has been made the corner stone of the so-called Christian religion. In fact the old pagan Mithraic cult has been transformed into Christianity. Tertullian admits, as did others, that Mithraism and Christianity were identical in all but name. Not only the same rituals and holidays, like Sunday or December 25th (Christmas day), were taken from the pagans, but even the puzzle of one-in-three and three-in-one was introduced from those very sources. And thus the venerable structure of Mosaic Monotheism was wrecked. Other demoralising and degrading tenets were also put in like the redemption or the atonement or the begetting of a son by God or so forth. Christianity based itself on the beliefs that man was born in sin, for which mother Eve's (woman's) responsibility was the greatest, and that as he was incapable of obeying the Law the loving God planned the sacrifice of his only son to redeem him! In his *Bible Myth*, Rev. J. W. Doane has given in parallel columns forty-eight similarities between Buddha and Christ, as described by Buddhism and Christianity, respectively. While Christ was alleged to have said that he came to the last tribes of Israel and to fulfil the Law, Paul made an

THE QUR-ÁNIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

improvement upon Judaic conceptions of God inasmuch as God's sovereignty was no more thought to be confined to His "chosen people"—the Israelites. Another improvement was that the sentiment of love was added to His austere attributes defined by the Jews. But alas! besides the demoralising and degrading tenets which Paul introduced in Christianity, even the Universality of God did not reach to its full limits. If it was extended to non-Israelites, it was limited only to those of them who believed in the "Blood of Christ."

It was further limited to those only who were baptised in his name. As to the quality of love in God, even that was degraded almost to a carnal passion so as to beget a son. Thus the Christian God-idea was made much more irrational than was the Judaic idea. When the God-idea in Judaism and Christianity is so defective it would be no use to dilate much upon the god-idea in other religions. In Buddhism it is alleged to be non-existent, though Buddha himself has come to be worshipped as a god—all-perfect, all-wise. God is only a kind of force in Buddhism. Nirvana is the goal of life. In fact Buddhism was only a cult. It was a revolt against the rigid caste system which the Brahmans had imposed. It was meant to deprive the Brahmans of the power they had obtained even over gods and goddesses who could only be approached through them. Vishnu (400 B.C.) says: "It is only by the favour of Brahmans that gods reside in Heaven." (Vishnu XIX. 27). So Buddha individualised religion, *i.e.*, put it into the hands of every individual, of whatsoever caste, to work up his own salvation by personally shunning this world, and the life in it as an evil, in the circumference of course of the transmigration of soul theory. Buddha gave up his own kingdom and his wife and family to achieve Nirvana. In Vedas, the God-idea exists only as a very imaginative philosophy

which is almost beyond human intelligence to grasp, and the result has been that the Hindu masses have come down to worship hand-made idols and stones. Even the educated among them bow down before trees, animals and rivers. Their god has to be awakened by ringing bells. He is propitiated by the blood of animals. (Human sacrifices, like the custom of burning the Hindu widows alive, have been stopped only by very rigorous secular laws of foreigners.) It might be that ten Hindus among ten millions are able to grasp, even in these days of enlightenment, the real philosophy of Vedas. The rest remain in the mire of gross idolatry, in spite of the efforts of their own reformers to preach the Unity of God. The Zoroastrians believed in two gods—one of good and the other of evil—and the poor, helpless man, the whole universe, was a plaything between these two rivals of equal power, who were constantly at war. *It was the unique privilege of Muhammad, son of Abdullah (may he continue always to be triumphant) alone, to have given to the world a conception of God which was both rational and spiritual, philosophic as well as scientific, and beneficial to humanity in its progress and development.* Muhammad performed many undeniable miracles, but the greatest miracle which he performed and the best proof that he gave of being an inspired Prophet and Messenger, was the God-idea which he instilled in the minds of the Arabs and which did not remain confined to one tribe, or one people, or one country, or one generation, but which was acclaimed by all the world for all times.

What the miraculous Prophet did first of all was to correct all those derogatory notions which represented God only as a tribal King, or one who begot children, sons or daughters, or who could be approached only through priests or Brahmans. He demolished all those notions that attributed to Allah (God) fatigue, suffering,

THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

sexual passions, or human sentiments. The Islamic God is not physical or personal. In reality He cannot be referred to as he, she, or it. The Islamic God cannot be symbolized like the Vedic gods by carved idols or animals, or by the elements, fire or water—or by the planets, the Sun or Moon; nor can He be anthropomorphized. Nor can human passions or weaknesses be attributed to Him. So there can be no begotten sons or daughters of His, nor can He be represented by Jesus or Krishna or Rama. The very opening chapter of the Qur-ān sings his praises as *Rabb-ul-Alamin*. The Arabic word *Rabb* according to the “*Taj-ul-Arus*” and the “*Arabic English Lexicon*,” by W. Lane, conveys the meaning of regulating, accomplishing, completing, fostering and nourishing. According to Imam Raghīb Isphānī it means “fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of perfection.” *Alamin* means the worlds and all the created things that exist. These two words *Rabb-ul-Alamin* convey the most distinguished conception of God in Islam. *Rabb* conveys a scientific idea. Long before scientists propounded the theory of evolution the Qur-ān proclaimed in the very beginning of the opening verse, that this universe has been evolved by an Evolver under set laws and He is fostering it even now “to make it attain one condition after another” until probably in millions of years, “it reaches its goal of perfection.” Is the God-idea in any other religion either ancient or biblical so rational as that conveyed by *Rabb*? Is the God-idea in any religion so universal as that conveyed by *Rabb-ul-Alamin*? According to the Qur-ān, God is not the God of Muslims alone, nor of this world alone. He is the Sustainer, the Cherisher, the Fosterer, the Evolver of all things in the Universe. Verse after verse of the Qur-ān gives Unique, Distinguishing and Majestic

ISLAMIC REVIEW

qualifications of God. In Chapter II, verse 255, runs in the words of Sale :

“ God, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting ; neither slumber nor sleep seizeth Him, to Him belongeth whatsoever is in heavens and on earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him, but through His good pleasure ? He knoweth that which is past, and that which is to come unto them, and they shall not comprehend anything of His knowledge but so far as He pleaseth. His Throne is extended over heavens and earth, and the preservation of both is no burden unto Him. He is the High, the Mighty. Let there be no violence in religion. Now is the right direction manifestly distinguished from deceit ; whoever therefore shall deny Taghut and believe in God shall surely take hold on a strong handle, which shall not be broken ; God is He Who Heareth, Seeth.” In his note Sale says, “ The Cursi (Throne) allegorically signifies the Divine Providence which sustains and governs the heavens and the earth and is infinitely above human comprehension.”

There is not a single page in the Qur-án which does not refer to Allah with one name, one attribute or other. In Chapter LIX, verses 22, 23, 24 eloquently describe as follows :—

“ He is Allah besides whom there is no god : the Knower of the unseen (future) and seen (present). He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is Allah besides Whom there is no god ; the King ; the Sovereign ; the Holy ; the Author of Peace ; the Grantor of Security ; Guardian over all things, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of every Greatness. Allah is more Sublime than what they (Christians or Hindus) associate with Him. He is Allah the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner (Artist). His are the most beautiful names. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declare His Glory and He is the Mighty, the Wise (Scientist.)

THE QUR-ĀNIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

A study of the above verses of the Qur-án will convince everybody how sublime, chaste, comprehensive and monotheistic the God-idea is in Islam when compared to that of other religions.

In order to further save the God-idea from being personified or anthropomorphized with human passions or sentiments as other religions had done before, the Qur-án has given a philosophic turn to the God-idea and declared :

“*Laisa kamislihi shaian*” (XLII. 11). There is nothing as His likeness. And again :

“*La tudrikohul absar.*” (VI. 103.) Vision comprehendeth Him not. Gibbon's remarks on this aspect of the Islamic God-idea are : “The creed of Muhammad is free from suspicion or ambiguity ; and the Qur-án is a glorious testimony to the Unity of God. The Prophet of Mecca rejected the worship of idols and men, of stars and planets, on the rational principle that whatever rises must set, that whatever is born must die, that whatever is corruptible must decay and perish. In the Author of the Universe his rational enthusiasm confessed and adored an Infinite and Eternal Being, without form or place, without issue or similitude, present to our most secret thoughts, existing by the necessity of His own Nature, and deriving from Himself moral and intellectual perfection. These sublime truths, thus announced in the language of the Prophet, are primarily held by his disciples and defined by metaphysical precision. A philosophic theist might subscribe to the popular creed of Muhammadans : a creed too sublime perhaps for our present faculties. What object remains for the fancy, or even the understanding where we have abstracted from the unknown substance all idea of time and space, of motion and matter, of sensation and reflection ? The first principle of reason and revelation was confirmed by the voice of Muhammad : his proselytes from India to

Morocco are distinguished by the name of Unitarians, and the danger of idolatry has been prevented by the interdiction of images."

ISLAM—"THE VOICE OF ALLAH"

BY SIR JALAL-UD-DIN LAUDUR-BRUNTON, BART., M.A.

Islam is a Living Religion, it gives a tone to human character and civilization, just as our Scientific Research adds to the prosperity and happiness of mankind. There is perfect harmony between a true religion and science ; and it must be so, because both are based upon truth. The only difference is that the domain of religion is the moral and spiritual side of human character, while science is the physical and material side.

We stand much in need of knowledge and experience for our material progress ; we stand in need of knowledge for the uplift of the spiritual life of our nature. We make progress in civilization through our scientific knowledge, *i.e.*, by reading the Will of God in His Book of nature. Similarly, we soar higher and higher in the regions of morality and spirituality through the knowledge which we acquire from the Word of God. Through science, we study the character of the Creator from His works, and through religion, we study the character and Will of the Creator from His Word, the Holy Qur-án. Both are seeking after knowledge—the Will of God manifested in the world. But the channels are difficult, *i.e.*, one reads of the works of the Great Creator, the other of His Word and Commandments, and the ultimate goal is one and the same. Science and Religion can be called the Twin Sisters. If Religion is but a branch of science, can we not study it like a science, and find out its basic principles and characteristics ? It would be well for us to find out what are the characteristics of a true Religion ?

ISLAM—"THE VOICE OF ALLAH"

Religion acquires knowledge from the Word of God. This is why every religion claims the possession of a revealed Book. The scriptures which are in the hands of the opponents of many religions are sure signs of the fact that the Word of God is the great foundation on which the superstructure of a religion stands. But what do the scriptures prove? They prove that God spoke once upon a time, or the utmost, that he spoke with man in the dead past. But can this satisfy the men that are now living if they do not experience the same Divine bliss at present? I am afraid that those who do not believe in the continuation of revelation will surely fail to convince one of the existence of God. One asks: "If God spoke in the past, why does He not speak in the present? "Are we to believe in God on the strength of past stories? The *Arya Samaj* believe that God never spoke again after the revelation of the *Vedas*. Similarly, many Christian friends claim that the Holy Bible is the last Word of God; after that He never addressed a man. Can it be possible that this religion could prove that this God is a Living God? If God spoke to Adam, to Moses, to Abraham, and to Jesus, and to many others including Noah, Job, John, Elijah and then to Muhammad (peace be upon them all), He should speak too in the present age. And if He does not, what on earth is the proof of His Existence in the modern times? God is invariably represented by all religions as Eternal and Ever-Living. But is not His long silence inconsistent with His Eternal attributes of speech?"

Thus, if Divine Revelation can be an element of true religion, it is only the fresh revelation in every age, because the revelation of the past is but a mystery affording no solid and fresh proof for the men of the present age.

In this respect, I must say, Islam occupies a unique position among the prominent religions of this world. While Christianity and Vedic Dharma (Hinduism) deny

its continuity, Islam upholds the continuity of Divine Revelation. The Holy Qur-án says : “ The righteous men shall have good news in this world’s life,” and again : “ By His own behest will He cause the Angels to descend with spirit on whom He pleaseth among His servants. . . . ” Both the above verses uphold a continuous revelation without age or time-limit. This does not frustrate God’s eternal attributes of speech with mankind, for He is ever making fresh revelation among His servants on whom He is pleased.

In Islam alone can one find the Unity of God. Every human being acknowledges the existence of ONE GOD, it is only the fool who says that there is no God—that person is sadly lacking in sense and reason. There are some who lose Him in His attributes. They are not able to get into touch with the Almighty Creator. The Hindus, for example, worship his many attributes, each separately, and to do that they bring in material forms. This affects the outlook on self and on others. So there cannot be a broad outlook to these people. Every one is eager to assert the superiority of an attribute which they regard more than those of others. Hence the difference in their outlook. They worship the material form, and in this there are again differences in the distribution of different functions. The high-caste Hindus put forth a claim that they have been begotten out of the higher limbs of Brahma, and the low-caste Hindus out of the feet of Brahma. Alas ! how can Dr. Ambedkar get equality of status with these people who have such a notion ? It is Islam alone that gives the Doctor what he needs. When the followers of our Holy Prophet from Mecca went to Medina, his Medina followers shared their poverty even with those from Mecca.

So long as men are on the various hills, there cannot possibly be the all-pervading Love of God among them, for every one of the various religions thinks that it is

ISLAM—"THE VOICE OF ALLAH"

Right and the others Wrong. To have that Heavenly Love all must be at the peak so that all must accept God as He is The ONLY God and there is none other beside Him.

The heading of this contribution is called "Islam or the Voice of God." I have given it this title because it (Islam) appealed to our Holy Prophet, for to him—and all Muslims—it was indeed the Voice of God which *called* him to deliver the Message of Allah unto all mankind, and our Holy Prophet responded to that Divine Call. God gave him a perfect socio-polito-religious code that binds all people securely in the bonds of Brotherhood, irrespective of colour, nationality, caste, or creed. The Qur'anic laws are unlike Mosaic laws or the laws of our Lord Jesus Christ (may God bless his soul), or the Vedic laws. The Qur'anic laws are dynamic and universal, whereas the other laws are static and partial. Mosaic laws are only for the Jews, and the Vedic laws are only for the Hindus. The laws of Jesus Christ are divorced from politics. A religion that dominates healthy politics, not sordid politics, is clung to by people. In the Holy Qur'an alone can one find politics not divorced from religion. Europeans and Americans, although they profess themselves to be the followers of Jesus Christ, have cast his principles of love to the winds and are merrily going on oppressing the coloured peoples in the name of civilization, and fighting among themselves like cats and dogs in the name of politics. Again, there are some who set a trailer to the Almighty God, with a view to making Him all the more powerful. In Christianity this trailer is called the "trinity." What! is not God All-powerful that a trailer must be added to give Him more power? Is the Great Creator not convincing enough that an "Assistant" or two must be given to help Him!

It is not only absurd but blasphemous to even think so. No wonder the Jews did not accept Christ as their

promised Messiah. We acknowledge Christ as a Holy Prophet but not the Son of God.

This is the Age of scepticism. The conduct of the Europeans and Americans clearly shows that they have very little faith in Christian doctrines. There is nothing binding on them. The last Great War with Germany showed very clearly that there is no religion in the West. If they were the true followers of Christ, they would not have fought like wolves as they had done. How can collective security be had amidst jealousy, hatred and narrow-mindedness? As every sect among the Hindus looks to its own welfare, so does every Westerner. But they have not collective security among themselves. Every Western nation has a hand raised against the other. The Holy Qur-án is the only medium through which this much-coveted Collective Security can be had if they will believe in the Unity of the ONE GOD and follow what the Qur-án dictates, and as expounded by our Holy Prophet Muhammad (may God bless his soul). The League of Nations and the many Conferences cannot bring Peace unless God is accepted in truth and in sincerity as their Sole Guide. It is true Religion which can alone bind us together in the holy bond of Brotherhood and bring us in direct contact with the Mighty God and Creator. May the whole Earth resound with ALLAH-O-AKBAR !

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASUL- ALLAH

BY THE HON'BLE MR. M. T. AKBAR, K. C.

(Continued from Vol. XXIV, p. 107.)

The miracle of the Qur-án is not merely, to use the words of Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall, in "the inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy." It equally lies in its matter. As one

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASUL ALLAH

reads the Qur-án slowly to one's self, in deep thought and reverence, a passage occurs which grips the mind in a blinding flash and at once the reader is whirled aloft into another world—

“ Of solitary thinkings such as dodge
Conception to the very bourn of heaven,
Then leave the naked brain.”

The Holy Qur-án itself in several places advises us to reflect and ponder deeply on the words of the Book. “ Do they not then reflect on the Qur-án ? Nay, on their hearts are their locks ” (47 ; 24 and 38, 29). Professor Nicholson in his “ Idea of Personality in Sufism,” says as follows, in words which must hurt all Muslims : “ I am going to take for granted what has often been doubted or denied—the sincerity of Muhammad and the reality of his prophetic inspiration—partly because it is a point on which all Muslims are agreed, and also because it seems to me that on no other hypothesis can the origin and early history of Islam be accounted for. It is easy to emphasise the contradictions into which he was drawn by his postulate of a fixed and immutable revelation, written in a Heavenly Book and communicated to him by a process in which he has merely the passive medium, while the course of events constantly required that the revelation should be plastic and responsive to his needs. If he was an impostor, we can only wonder at his lack of foresight ; but if he was sincere, it must be admitted that his prophetic endowment was not of the highest order. Had he stood in the same intimate and free relation to God as the Hebrew Prophets, would it ever have occurred to him that the Qur-án is the literal Word of God, and would his own part in it have been confined to hearing it dictated by Gabriel ? ”

The burden of his criticism is that our Holy Prophet was limited in his prophetic endowment when he claimed that the Qur-án was a fixed and immutable revelation

from God, when the progress of events required a revelation that should be plastic and responsive to his needs. Why the Professor thinks that the Qur-án was not plastic and responsive to the Prophet's needs I cannot understand, unless he expected the whole Qur-án to be sent down by Allah in one lump in bare skeleton form. It is the same argument that was once raised and which is referred to in the Qur-án (17 ; 90-93). Why was not an angel sent, or a treasure from heaven ? What seems clear to me is that the Holy Book is plastic and responsive to the needs of all times, and that is why our Prophet was the last of all Prophets, and the Qur-án the last of all revelations. The reason why this was so is indicated in the Qur-án. In the very first words revealed to our Prophet at Mount Hira, God said, " Read in the name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot of blood. Read and your Lord is Most Honourable who taught (to write) with the pen. Taught man what he knew not." (Ch. XCVI.) This passage clearly presages the advent of reading, writing, learning and the acquisition of knowledge and the sciences.

In repeated passages the Qur-án emphasizes the use of the reflective reason and the increase of knowledge regarding the wonders of the universe, for a correct appreciation of the Omnipotence and Power of God. It is the Qur-án which gave the first impetus to inductive knowledge and the modern discoveries of science (see Sir Muhammad Iqbal's Six Lectures for proof). In Chapter 58, verse 11, Allah says, " He will exalt those who believe and those who are given knowledge in high degrees." The age of reliance on the guiding-strings of revelation was to cease, and in future man was to depend for a knowledge of God on his own ability to expand his reason by the acquisition of knowledge, provided he strictly adhered to the limits set by the Qur-án and followed the minimum rules of conduct therein set forth. That is why I take

it that the Sufi saints of Islam became the leaders of religion after the Prophet, till the acquisition of knowledge had progressed far enough for each man to act on his initiative. But apart from this, the Holy Book is full of examples of mystic utterances which are capable of progressive interpretations according to the advance of the world and the improvement of knowledge.

There are passages in the Qur-án, which cannot be interpreted at present to the satisfaction of man, but which, I have no doubt, will become clear as knowledge advances, unless of course this world is destroyed by the folly of man. I will content myself with a few examples, and will also indicate how the same ideas occurred to some of the greatest English poets from time to time. One of the verses on which I have pondered is verse 11-12 of Chapter 87, where Allah says, of those who are unfortunate, that they will enter the great fire, and that therein they will neither live nor die. The same idea occurs in 20 ; 74. There is to be neither life nor death in hell in the next world. Keats expressed the same idea as follows :

“ The feel of not to feel it,
When there is none to heal it
Nor numbed sense to steel it,
Was never said in rhyme.”

Mr. Middleton Murray in his latest book on Shakespeare in his exposition of Macbeth, says, that Shakespeare has referred to this idea mysteriously in Macbeth's words :

“ Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time ; for from this instant
There's nothing serious in mortality
All is but toys.....”

Says Mr. Murray: “ From this condition there is no escape in death ; he who has murdered sleep, has murdered Death also. He is the victim of uninterrupted and unending Time, chained to the wheel of an everlasting Now.” Verse 14 of Chapter 32 is to this effect : “ So taste (the evil of your deeds) ! For as much as you forgot the

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASUL ALLAH

The Qur-án refers to Allah as the Loving One (85 ; 14 and 9 ; 108), and that Allah's mercy surrounds everything and that in spite of man's weakness Allah is ready to help him to rise (42 ; 30). " Do not despair of the mercy of Allah," says the Holy Qur-án (39 ; 53), which reminds one of the lines of Fitzgerald :

" Like to a child sent with a fluttering light
To feel his way across a gusty night,
Man walks the world. Again and yet again,
The Lamp shall be, by fits of passion slain,
But shall not He who sent him from the door
Relight the lamp once more and yet once more ?"

I think these examples ought to suffice to prove that a humble Arabian over 1350 years ago anticipated ideas which occurred later to the minds of renowned poets of a mighty nation. But these poets in the words of the Qur-án only misled those who followed them, " for they wander about bewildered in every valley and they say that which they do not do " (Ch. 26, verses 224—226).

The Qur-án says that nothing has been omitted from the Book, the truth of which is apparent to anyone who studies the Book. Every situation that can arise in this life is referred to, sometimes in cryptic words, and even the very form of prayer a Muslim should utter when he is confronted by any of these situations is prescribed by God. " Inna Cafaynakal Musthahzieen," says Allah in one place. " Am I not sufficient for thee against those who scoff at thee ?" The devout Muslim searches the Holy Book for these treasures wherein God prescribes the very remedy to relieve the particular pain, and stores them in his memory. That is why the Qur-án refers to itself as the healer of mental and spiritual wounds (10—57).

In several places there are indications of inventions, discoveries and contrivances, which became common only many centuries after. For example—in Chapter XVI, verses 6—8, there is a reference to unknown types of vehicles for carrying heavy loads and passengers, and in

Chapter 35, verse 1 and Chapter 36, verse 35, there is a hint of the theory of evolution. Chapter 42, verse 32, and Chapter 55, verse 24, can only refer to ships like the *Queen Mary*. What else can Chapter 36, verses 41 and 42, refer to than to the aeroplane, and the submarine? Chapter 55, verse 33, refers to the wireless and television. There is even a passage in the Qur-án predicting the visits of pilgrims in modern times in motor cars to the Holy Kaaba, and perhaps in future in aeroplanes, besides journeying on the backs of lean camels.

The ladies and gentlemen who wrote to the "Nation and Athenaeum" their views on prayers and response by God (referred to in my last article), would have seen the answer to their difficulty in Chapter 19, verses 1—11. The points to be noted in these verses are :

- (a) That the prayer must be addressed to God by a holy or pious person, who has always found solace in prayer.
- (b) That it must be for something which will turn out to be meritorious, and not sinful.
- (c) That the prayer must be uttered to God with the full appeal of the soul (*Nidaan Hafiyya*).
- (d) That the prayer must be addressed to God only as a last resource, when there is no human solution possible.

If the prayer is answered, God will indicate to the suppliant what he is to do, and his wish will be fulfilled in a natural manner. Zacharias was a Prophet of God, and he was not one who was merged in God when he addressed his prayer, and the sign, that he got from God, was that he was to observe silence for three days and glorify God morning and evening. These verses show clearly that a man cannot get a response from God if he goes to a church, temple or mosque and asks God, for instance, for a motor car. A most wonderful prophecy is

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASUL ALLAH

to be seen in Abraham's prayer (Chapter XIV, verses 35—38), and its fulfilment in the holy city of Mecca at the present time. In that prayer Abraham asked for a secure city free from the worship of idols. The whole city was to be dedicated to the worship of Allah ; and the maintenance and sustenance of its inhabitants were to depend on the yearning and love of some people in the outside world who would provide them with the necessary "fruits." I do not think I need allude in detail to the marriage and divorce laws of the Qur-án. Marriage was to be a civil contract between husband and wife, and the wife, by raising the price of her dowry, had the power of limiting her husband's rights to divorce her. If the two could not live peaceably the husband could divorce his wife after giving three notices of divorce distributed over a period of three months, if all efforts to reconcile them by the relatives of both parties have failed. I hope my readers will read carefully the provision with regard to polygamy. In my opinion it was meant to curb the licentiousness of man. Adultery and fornication were made criminal offences, and the legal permission to marry more than one wife up to four was coupled with the legal obligation to maintain the separate wives and children of the unions, and a clear indication that monogamy was to be preferred. The difficulty in the modern law to get an affiliation order is well-known to every one, and even under the existing law in civilised countries, a mistress has no right to ask for maintenance for herself, and she and her illegitimate children have no right to participate in her paramour's estate on intestacy. It will thus be seen how wise the Muslim Law is in its recognition that all men are not the same in regard to sexual matters, and that anything out of the normal (for example, after a great war) will only be allowed on the strict principle of legal responsibility. In many modern Muslim countries, the principles on these points have been altered and adjusted to meet

modern conditions according to the religious conscience of the inhabitants, and there seems to be nothing rigid about these principles of the civil and criminal law in the Qur-án. As regards the Islamic law of inheritance, as Sir Muhammad Iqbal says, it attracted the admiration of Von Kremer who referred to this law as the "supremely original branch of Muslim Law."

I think I have indicated sufficiently the plastic and elastic nature of all the provisions of the Qur-án to meet the changing conditions of the world, and that its very conception of God provided for the progressive evolution of the human end or view of God in pace with the broadening of the horizon of man's intellect. That is why I take it, "Goethe" (in the words of Sir Muhammad Iqbal), "while making a general review of Islam as an educational force, said to Eckermann: 'You see this teaching never fails; with all our systems we cannot go, and generally speaking no man can go further than that!'"

In the passage which I have cited from Professor Nicholson, he stated, "Had he (*i.e.*, the Prophet) stood in the same intimate and free relation to God as the Hebrew Prophets, would it ever have occurred to him that the Qur-án is the literal Word of God and would his own part in it have been confined to hearing it dictated by Gabriel?" That is just the point. The Holy Prophet did not claim to stand in the same intimate and free relation to God as the Hebrew Prophets, because it was the mission of the Prophet to demonstrate that that was a wrong relationship, only fit for people of a certain grade of mentality in the course of human evolution. To the Hebrew Prophets, God was in the position of a Wise and Loving Father, and man was His dutiful child. The long narrations from the lives of the Hebrew Prophets as recorded in the Qur-án were meant to demonstrate that the Hebrew Prophets had not recognised the extreme

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMAD-UR-RASUL ALLAH

Transcendence of God, and God had to rebuke them for their ignorance. For instance in Chapter 7—143, Moses requested God to show Himself so that he may gaze on Him; and God replied, "Thou wilt not see Me." In XX—17, when God asked Moses what he had in his hand, Moses not only replied that it was his staff, but he went on unnecessarily to detail the uses to which he put his staff. In Chapter XI, verses 45 and 46, Noah asked God to save his son from destruction, as "my son is of my household"; and God's reply was, "he is not of thy household; he is of evil conduct, so ask not of Me that whereof thou hast no knowledge. I admonish thee lest thou be among the ignorant." Even Abraham and Jesus Christ were questioned by Allah. Abraham pleaded with God on behalf of the people of Lot, and the reply was, "O Abraham! Forsake thee! Lo! thy Lord's commandment has gone forth, and lo! there cometh unto them a doom which cannot be repelled" (11—76). When Jesus Christ was questioned by God whether he had ever attributed divinity to himself and his mother, the reply was, "Be glorified! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right." (5—16).

It was the mission of Prophet Muhammad to insist on and emphasize the Transcendence of God which had not been given its full weight by the Hebrew Prophets; and to show mankind that, as revelation was henceforth to be cut off and Prophets to cease to appear, the only way in future was the way indicated by God in the Islamic formula of faith. Professor Nicholson has, in my opinion, failed to appreciate the significance of Islam, and that is perhaps why he was puzzled to account for the doctrine of personal relations between man and God in Islam, and why he thought the Sufi saints had imported into the Islamic religion the peculiar doctrines of the Christian faith relating to a god who suffered for the sins of humanity. I shall endeavour to explain how in Islam

the two points are reconciled, namely, that God is the transcendently great Creator which the discoveries of science are indicating, and yet that, by His mercy, man has been given the privilege of having personal relations with Him through His slave, the Holy Prophet. As a matter of fact, the Professor came to the same conclusion, but he was of opinion that this was a later importation from Christian ideas and Hellenistic influences. On the contrary, this is, and was, the religion of Islam from the time that a declaration of the Islamic article of faith was made one of the five compulsory practices of the Faith.

(To be continued.)

GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

Not detrimental to the interests of Islam

[We reproduce below a part of an article that appeared in the Calcutta Muslim daily, *The Star of India*, from the pen of a Muslim scholar whose name was not given. We take this liberty in view of the fact that the growth of Nationalistic feeling in Muslim countries has supplied our adversaries, the Christian missionaries, who are otherwise helpless before the onslaughts of Islam, with a plausible weapon to fight the claims of Islam, inasmuch as this is supposed to go against the conception of Islamic Brotherhood. This article conclusively proves that in spite of the new spirit of Nationalism in Muslim countries, the cultural and religious Brotherhood of Islam is as intact today as it ever was before. Rather, with the new orientation of National outlook, the Islamic Brotherhood has assumed a new sense and significance which was never expected before.—*Ed.—I. R.*]

Even if we accept that Turkey and Persia have become nationalistic in thought, it does not logically follow that they have turned non-Muslims. The Unity of Islam is grounded on the cardinal creed of the Unity of Allah, and the finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad.

GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

All Turks and Persians believe in the Kalima and the Qur-án. Recently the Turks and the Persians have imprisoned two false claimants to Prophethood. The state religion of Persia, Egypt and Afghanistan is still constitutionally Islam. According to the Persian Constitution, no *Babi* or *Bahai* who repudiates the finality of Muhammad's Prophethood can stand for the membership of the Persian Parliament. It is only Turkey which declared the separation of State and religion. We admit that it is a serious divergence from the ideal of Islamic polity, but barring this 6th section, the other five sections of the Kemalist Programme, recently promulgated in Turkey, are entirely in accord with Islam. At the same time, we must not forget that, in spite of declaring the separation of Church and State, the Angora Government maintains an ecclesiastical department and meets the expenses of mosques, theological seminaries and special schools for the training of *Imams* and *Khatibs* who serve in the Republic, and get their honoraria from the Government. The State has also prescribed a special course of Islamic religious instruction in all public schools. "Reuter" has described the six sections of the New Kemalist Programme as "savouring of Communism and Fascism," but, according to Sir Iqbal, they are based on Islamic principles of social economics, so much so that if he is made the dictator of the Islamic world, he himself will be ready to introduce 95 per cent. of the Turkish Reforms in every Muslim country.

MUSLIM VIEW OF NATIONALISM

Our own reading of the nationalistic movements in the world of Islam is as follows—

(1) Nationalism is not a fixed or final goal, but a stage in the so-called evolution of Man. It is a passing phase. It has to perform a duty of organization, and then give place to a more catholic ideal. This is the end

ISLAMIC REVIEW

of nationalism in the West, and it will be in the East as well, for the world is learning at great cost that either it must abolish absolutist nationalism, or perish in an anarchic and suicidal struggle. The Muslim Powers are passing from this nationalistic stage of their inner organization and development, but they are religiously capable of emerging from this stage more rapidly than the Westerners.

(2) Nationalism in the Muslim countries has a cause and its effect. The main cause of the rise of nationalism in Turkey, Egypt and Persia is the invasion of the countries by the aggressive nationalism and imperialistic industrialism of the European Powers. The Muslim States are situated just face to face with the imperialistic nationalism of Europe, and the sheer necessity of preserving their independence against the West has forced them to arm themselves with the same defensive weapons with which they are being constantly threatened and exploited, namely, the psychological equipment of nationalism and the economic armament of industrialism, the former for securing internal unity and external liberty, and the latter to achieve material self-sufficiency and power so essential for the defence of their country and religion. In this also they are following the Prophet's advice: "Arm yourselves with the weapons of your enemies." According to Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal "each Muslim people is at present sinking into its own deeper self," for the realisation of its destiny, but all are bound to meet and unite for contributing their best rejuvenated self to the building of a greater, stronger and more united Islamic World.

IMPERIAL PUBLICISTS

(3) Pan-Islamism never existed save and except in the minds of the European imperialist publicists. Cultural solidarity of Islam is a reality, and its ideal to

GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

convert the whole of humanity into an ideal polity is still a living force. Nay, the modern economic and international developments of the world have given it a new vitality.

(4) Another factor must not be missed sight of. Turkey and Persia are mainly populated by Muslims. The Turks have been striving to create religious homogeneity by exchange of population, and by encouraging the emigration of Muslims from Greece and Rumania. Nationalism, therefore, in such Muslim countries, means the cult of the defence and development of the culture and religion of the majority. Nationalism is not inconsistent with Islam, but the form which it is taking in Islamic countries is mainly meant for the defence of Islam itself.

(5) The other factor is the modern scientific means of communication by papers and journals, wireless and telegraphs, railway, motor and air services, together with great material prosperity born of State-controlled industrialism. These have far more facilitated unity movements, and social and cultural intercourse among the various Muslim peoples, than it was ever dreamed of in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Chinese Muslims are at present better known and represented at Al-Azhar, Cairo, than at any time in the past. The First and Second World Muslim Congresses at Mecca (1927) and Jerusalem (1931), are achievements of the modern era made possible only by the modern means of communications.

UNITY MOVEMENTS IN ISLAM

(6) Our conclusion, that nationalism is a passing phase of the internal development of Islamic countries, and that Muslim peoples shall emerge from this stage more rapidly and more powerfully than the Western nations, is substantiated by the recent developments in the Muslim world.

The breakdown of the Disarmament Conference, and the growing aggressiveness of the European nationalism and imperialism itself have now forced Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and the Arab countries to turn from the West to the East, and from pure politics to religion. Historical schisms are becoming healed and bridged; the Shah of Iran has visited Turkey; the Turanians and the Iranians have been reconciled; the Pahlavi Ajam has officially recognized the Saudi Puritan Arab; the Sharifians of Iraq and Transjordan have made their peace with the Saudians of Nejd and the Hedjaz; the frontier disputes between Iran and Afghanistan have been fraternally settled by the Turkish Arbitration Commission of Fakhruddin Pasha; the Sunni and the Shia have made a "rapprochement"; the Sunni Saudi Arabia has concluded a perpetual Treaty of Islamic Brotherhood and Arab Unity with the Shia Yemen through the intervention of the World Muslim Congress; a Shia Imam, Kashful Ghata of Kerbala, led the prayer, and delivered the sermon on the Unity of Islam at the Second World Muslim Congress held at "Haram-al-Aqsa," Jerusalem, in 1931. The Persian Education Minister has recently founded several schools, especially for the Hanafi Fiqah; the Persian Government has issued a "firman" which forbids the practice of *Tabbarra* (i.e., attack on Sunni Khalifas by the Shias) and enjoins the need of Islamic solidarity in face of the foreign imperialism which is threatening the Muslim States.

Then there is the new Muslim Youth Movement, with its centre at Cairo, and branches in all parts of Islamdom. Its objects are—

- (1) To search for means to strengthen Islamic solidarity between different countries.
- (2) To fight atheism and defend Islam.
- (3) To establish a League of Islamic Nations for settling Islamic disputes....¹

¹ *Whither Islam*, by Professor Gibb of the London University.

GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

These are only some of the recent developments in the Muslim World making for a more definite, realistic and broad-based Islamic Unity. These events were inconceivable—even for the wildest imagination of the Pan-Islamists—three decades ago, but they are accomplished facts at present, and even a man living in the “outer darkness” can see through them.

TURKS' FAITH IN ISLAM

In the last 3 years four most prominent Turks have visited India and tried to interpret the nationalism of Muslim States in terms of progressive Islam. They are (i) Husain Rauf Bey, the Minister of Marine in Enver Pasha's War Cabinet, and the first Premier of the Turkish Republic which exacted the Lausanne Treaty from the Allies; (ii) Doctor Bahjat Wahby Bey, a great champion of the Cultural Solidarity of the Muslim “Ummat”; (iii) Madame Halida Adib Hanum, who emphasized the Universality of Islam at the foundation ceremony at the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, on 1st March 1935; (iv) Dr. Ismail Sadqi Bey, retired Sessions Judge of Angora, who recently delivered a lecture at Bombay on “Islam, the Religion of Progress.” These eminent Turks have tried to show that the Turks are faithful to Islam, for they believe that Islam alone is the religion of Peace, Progress and Prosperity. Husain Rauf Bey, in the course of a speech at Calcutta, reiterating the Turks' invincible faith in Islam, said: “The Turks, who have sacrificed four millions of their bravest sons at the altar of the defence of Islam, can never forsake the standard of the Holy Prophet.”

ISLAMIC REVIEW
CORRESPONDENCE

FINSBURY PARK, N. 4.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.
DEAR SIR,

I am very much interested in your religion, and I would like to study it further. Your name has been given to me by some Muslim friends, as the proper people to get the right information from.

I shall be highly obliged if you would send me a copy of your Qur-ân and Islamic Literature.

I am,
Yours faithfully,
H. D.

BROMFIELD, ADEL, LEEDS.

THE IMAM,
THE MOSQUE, WOKING.
DEAR SIR,

I thank you very much for the *Islamic Review* and the literature you so kindly sent me, as also for your letter. I enclose the Declaration Form duly filled in.

There are one or two points I am not quite clear about.

I understand that Prayer must be offered in Arabic, but does that just apply to countries where Arabic is spoken? Can I learn the Prayers in Arabic subsequently and offer them now in English?

I am afraid at the moment I cannot afford a copy of the Holy Qur-ân, but could you advise me as to the Prayers I should offer and also as to anything I should do?

I am also sorry to say I cannot visit the Mosque just yet, but I hope that will not prevent me from becoming a member of the Islamic Brotherhood.

I am,
Yours very sincerely,
STANLEY ANYAN.

LONDON, N. 1.

THE IMAM,
THE SHAH JEHAN MOSQUE, WOKING.
DEAR SIR,

I respectfully beg to acknowledge the receipt of your very kind letter of the 10th instant, which afforded me great pleasure, and which I feel very proud to possess.

CORRESPONDENCE

It is my belief, that the ideal to which tend the religions of the world worthy of the name is Peace. When this great Truth is finally understood, and Humanity bows thereto (the day seems very near at hand), Islam and Judea will have fulfilled their Mission on Earth.

Very humbly yours,
J. M. WOLFSON.

A NEW MUSLIM'S FIRMNESS IN FAITH

[The steady advance of the Islamic Movement in England has, as is well known, created a great anxiety in Christian missionary circles. These leave no stone unturned to alienate the feelings of the English Muslims from the Faith of Islam by means of malicious misrepresentations. We have published in the past several instances of such infamous attempts on the part of Christian missionaries to apostate English Muslims. Here is a fresh instance. The letter which we reproduce below is from a lady who embraced Islam last year, after a thorough study of the subject. Since then, it seems, she has been flooded with all sorts of propaganda against Islam. Being adept in the art of mischievous propaganda, these missionaries know very well that such literature as bear the name of a born Eastern Muslim, may be calculated most effectually, to shake the faith of a new convert. This lady has been sent a number of this kind of books one of which she has sent us for our information. It, nevertheless, will be a great disappointment to the Christian missionary circles concerned, that the effect of this mean effort of theirs has been an aversion, not for Islam but for the very people from whom the propaganda proceeded, as is evident from the letter which we reproduce in part below.—*Ed.—I. R.*]

HANOVER SQUARE, BRADFORD.

DEAR IMAM,

Assalamo-alaikum !

I am forwarding you a book. It is just one of many I have received. I think the type and taste of this propaganda is vile, and a disgrace to the Christians, when given by the hands of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Husainy. The other tracts are all more or less alike. How foolish to try to change the mind of one who has found the Truth to go back to a mystical faith !

ELLIE AFIFA MITCHELL.

ISLAM : A STUDY

BY SYED SABAH-UD-DIN ABDUR RAHMAN, B.A.

(Continued from Vol. XXIV, p. 198)

In the midst of these tribulations one of the followers of Muhammad asked him to curse the infidels. "I am not sent," said the Prophet, "for this, nor was I sent but as a mercy for mankind." It is not worthy of a speaker of truth, said he on another occasion, to curse people.

Once an infidel came upon Muhammad with a naked sword, and said to him, "who can now deliver thee from my hand." The Prophet replied, "God Almighty!" It is said that the sword dropped from the infidel's hands and the Prophet picked it up and said to him: "who can now rescue thee from me." The infidel was perturbed but said, "you have made a captive, prove yourself superior to the other captors." Thereupon the Prophet told him to say, "I testify that there is no deity but God." He said he would never say that; but that he would not fight with him, nor befriend his opponents. The Prophet let him go and when he returned to his own comrades, he told them that he had come to them from a company of the best of men.¹

Again, Anas says that a Jewess brought to Muhammad a goat which had been poisoned, in the hope that he would eat some of it. The woman's motive was discovered and she was brought into the presence of the Prophet who questioned her. She said she wanted to kill him, to which he replied that God was not willing to let her have her wish. The attendant said that if permitted, it were best to put her to death, but he said "No."²

¹ This story can be found in any popular biography of Muhammad. *Vide* also Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din's "*Ideal Prophet*," and Bosworth Smith's "*Muhammad and Muhammadanism*."

² Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din in *The Ideal Prophet*.

ISLAM : A STUDY

Again, when at the zenith of his power, he showed honourable treatment to his captive which might serve as a model to modern governments in their treatment of prisoners of war. After the defeat of Clan Tay of Yeomen, a band of Christian women was brought before the Prophet. Among them being Safana, the daughter of the illustrious philanthropist known as Hatim. When the Prophet came to know of her parentage, he showed her every respect. He told her that the generosity of her father called forth tender treatment of his daughter. "God loves those who are kind to His creatures," said the Prophet to the lady, "and Islam aims at inculcating the higher virtues. Consequently it must recognise them wherever they exist." With these words the Prophet released Safana, but she would not depart if her companions were to remain state prisoners. Her self-abnegation could not go unrewarded and the nobleness of Muhammad was stirred. The whole company were given leave to depart and were dispatched to their town under a trustworthy escort. ¹

Islam consists in cherishing the profoundest sympathy for God's creatures, Believers or unbelievers. "The unbelievers have the same rights and the same duties as we have," said Muhammad, "and so we are equal ;" ² and he used to show the utmost regard for them. Once a bier was carried by him and he rose to his feet, and it was said to him, "this is the funeral of a Jew." He answered, "was it not the container of a soul ?" ³ He advised his followers accordingly : "Should the bier of any one pass by you, whether Jew, Christian or Muslim, rise to your feet." ⁴

God does not allow you, the Prophet taught his followers, to enter the houses of the people of the Book

¹ Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din in *The Ideal Prophet*

² *Islamic Review*, 1916.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

ISLAMIC REVIEW

(i.e. the Jews, Christians, etc.), without their permission, or to beat them or their women or to eat up their fruits. "Whoever torments the Zimmis, torments me,"¹ was the gist or kernel of his teaching towards the followers of other faiths.

These were precisely the teachings which emanated from that great soul, the fountain of all nobility who came into this world to give a perfect code for humanity ; and as we proceed we shall find that these teachings of Lord Muhammad were followed in all integrity and nobleness of purpose by his immediate and later successors. When Iran came under Muslim domination, Abu Bakr took immediate steps to settle the peasantry securely in their possession. They were released from the "galling oppression of the large land-holders, their assessments were revised and placed on a stable basis, broken aqueducts were restored and new ones built. Liberty of conscience was allowed to everyone, and the Muslims were ordered not to interfere with the religion of the peoples."²

The Caliph Omar was ever solicitous for the welfare of his non-Muslim subjects. When Iraq was conquered Abdur Rahman and Belal demanded from the Caliph that the lands of the vanquished races should be distributed amongst the Mussalman soldiers. The Great Caliph refused to do so, and at last the matter was referred to a tribunal, consisting of Ali, Osman, Talha and Abdullah bin Omar, who sided with Omar in letting the Zimmis retain their possessions. Abdur Rahman and Belal were still dissatisfied, but when Omar interpreted the Qur-ânic injunctions, they had to remain silent.³

Again, when a Muslim of the clan of Bakr bin Dail, murdered a Christian of Hairat, Omar, on hearing of it, ordered the murderer to be surrendered to the heirs of

¹ *Al-Hakim*.

² Amir Ali, *History of the Saracens*, p. 33.

³ *Kitabul-Kharaj*, pp. 14, 15. Quoted by Maulana Shibli.

ISLAM: A STUDY

the murdered. Accordingly the murderer was so surrendered to Hunain, an heir of the murdered. Hunain killed the man.¹ Again, when Omar visited Jerusalem and entered the Church of Resurrection, he declined to perform his devotions in the Church, when the time came for *Asar* (late afternoon) prayer, and prayed on the steps of the Church of Constantine. "For," said he to the patriarch, "had I done so, the Muslims in a future age might have infringed the treaty under cover of imitating my example."² But alas! their stern, just and ultra-liberal Caliph fell a victim to the dagger of a non-Muslim, and the greatest, and the most powerful ruler of the time gave the following advice to his successor before taking his final rest:—

"Lastly," said Omar, "I recommend to him (his successor) for the sake of God and His Prophet, that he should keep the treaties concluded with the unfaithful, and wage not wars with those already reduced to subjection, nor lay burdens upon them (non-Muslims) which are beyond their power."³

"The blood of the Zimmi is like our blood," said Ali, the lover of truth and justice. Again, the humane, liberal and benign feelings towards non-Muslims were revealed in a letter of Caliph Omar II to Abu Bakr bin Muhammad. "Examine the public books," wrote he, "and if any injustice has been done before my time to Muslim or non-Muslim, give back what belongs to him."⁴

Thus far we have spoken of the Qur-ánic injunctions as well as the teachings of the Prophet, and of the behaviour of his immediate followers towards the non-Muslims. We shall now discuss another libellous statement which alleges that Muhammadanism relegated men of other

¹ *Hidaya*, pp. 338, 339. Quoted by *Shibli*.

² M. Pickthall in *The Culture of Islam* and Amir Ali in *History of the Saracens*.

³ *Von Kremer Cultur Geschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 16, 17, as translated by S. K. B.

⁴ *Weil*, G. d. c. Vol. I, p. 589, as translated by S. K. B.

faiths to a position of static inferiority. An unbiased study of history will prove such an allegation to be a deliberate perversion of the truth. History records that a non-Muslim was able to rise to the highest offices of the state, even to the post of Vizier, without any compulsion to denounce his own faith, and non-Muslims alone held offices in the financial and revenue departments. Two most important functions under the Caliphs were those of the Vizier and the Katib (modern Secretary of State), and non-Muslims, under more than one Caliph, enjoyed these high dignities.¹ "Even during the period of the Crusades," says Becker, "when the religious position was greatly intensified through Christian policy, Christians cannot have been uncommon, otherwise Muslim theorists would never have uttered their constant invectives against the employment of Christians in administrative duties."²

And long before the Crusades, Muawiyah employed Christians very largely in his service, and other members of the reigning house followed his example. A Christian Arab, Ak-Akhtal, was court-poet, and the father of St. John of Damascus, counsellor to the Caliph Abd-al-Malik.³ Salmuyah was the Secretary of State in the reign of Caliph Al-Muatasim, and no royal documents were valid unless countersigned by him. So great was the Caliph's personal affection for this Salmuyah, that he was overwhelmed with grief at his death, and ordered his body to be brought to the palace, and the Christian rites were performed with great solemnity.⁴

¹ *Islamic Civilization*, by S. K. B., p. 237.

² Becker : *Islam and Christianity*, pp. 31, 32.

³ Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, p. 62.

⁴ *Vide* Maulana Shibli's article on Zimmis, on the authority of Ibn Abi Usabiyah, Vol. I, p. 164.

(To be continued.)

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

WHAT IS ISLAM ?

[The following is a very brief account of Islam, and some of its teachings. For further details, please write to the IMAM of the Mosque, Woking, Surrey, England.]

ISLAM : THE RELIGION OF PEACE.—The word Islam literally means : (1) Peace ; (2) the way to achieve peace ; (3) submission, as submission to another's will is the safest course to establish peace. The word in its religious sense signifies complete submission to the Will of God.

OBJECT OF THE RELIGION.—Islam provides its followers with the perfect code, whereby they may work out what is noble and good in man, and thus maintain peace between man and man.

THE PROPHET OF ISLAM.—Muhammad, popularly known as the Prophet of Islam, was, however, the last Prophet of the Faith. Muslims, *i.e.*, the followers of Islam, accept all such of the world's Prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus, as revealed the Will of God for the guidance of humanity.

THE QUR-ÁN.—The Gospel of the Muslim is the Qur-án. Muslims believe in the Divine origin of every other sacred book, inasmuch as all such previous revelations have become corrupted through human interpolation, the Qur-án, the last Book of God, came as a recapitulation of the former Gospels.

ARTICLES OF FAITH IN ISLAM.—These are seven in number : belief in (1) Allah ; (2) Angels ; (3) Books from God ; (4) Messengers from God ; (5) the Hereafter ; (6) the Premeasurement of good and evil ; (7) Resurrection after death.

The life after death, according to Islamic teaching, is not a new life, but only a continuance of this life, bringing its hidden realities into light. It is a life of unlimited progress ; those who qualify themselves in this life for the progress will enter into Paradise, which is another name for the said progressive life after death, and those who get their faculties stunted by their misdeeds in this life will be the denizens of the Hell—a life incapable of appreciating heavenly bliss, and of torment—in order to get themselves purged of all impurities and thus to become fit for the life in Heaven. State after death is an image of the spiritual state in this life.

The sixth article of Faith has been confused by some with what is popularly known as Fatalism. A Muslim neither believes in Fatalism nor Predestination ; he believes in Premeasurement. Everything created by God is for good in the given use and under the given circumstances. Its abuse is evil and suffering.

PILLARS OF ISLAM.—These are five in number : (1) Declaration of faith in the Oneness of God, and in the Divine Messengership of Muhammad ; (2) Prayer ; (3) Fasting ; (4) Almsgiving ; (5) Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine at Mecca.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.—The Muslims worship One God—the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Just, the Cherisher of All the

Worlds, the Friend, the Guide, the Helper. There is none like Him. He has no partner. He is neither begotten nor has He begotten any son or daughter. He is Indivisible in Person. He is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Glorious, the Magnificent, the Beautiful, the Eternal, the Infinite, the First and the Last.

FAITH AND ACTION.—Faith without action is a dead-letter. Faith by itself is insufficient, unless translated into action. A Muslim believes in his own personal accountability for his actions in this life and in the hereafter. Each must bear his own burden and none can expiate for another's sin.

ETHICS OF ISLAM.—"Imbue yourself with Divine Attributes," says the noble Prophet. God is the prototype of man, and His Attributes form the basis of Muslim ethics. Righteousness in Islam consists in leading a life in complete harmony with the Divine Attributes. To act otherwise is sin.

CAPABILITIES OF MAN IN ISLAM.—The Muslim believes in the inherent sinlessness of man's nature, which, made of the goodliest fibre, is capable of unlimited progress, setting him above the angels, and leading him to the border of Divinity.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN ISLAM.—Man and woman come from the same essence, possess the same soul, and they have been equipped with equal capability for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments. Islam places man and woman under the like obligations, the one to the other.

EQUALITY OF MANKIND AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM.—Islam is the religion of the Unity of God and the equality of mankind. Lineage, riches and family honours are accidental things; virtue and the service of humanity are the matters of real merit. Distinctions of colour, race and creed are unknown in the ranks of Islam. All mankind is of one family, and Islam has succeeded in welding the black and the white into one fraternal whole.

PERSONAL JUDGMENT.—Islam encourages the exercise of personal judgment and respects difference of opinion, which, according to the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, is a blessing of God.

KNOWLEDGE.—The pursuit of knowledge is a duty in Islam, and it is the acquisition of knowledge that makes men superior to angels.

SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Every labour which enables man to live honestly is respected. Idleness is deemed a sin.

CHARITY.—All the faculties of man have been given to him as a trust from God, for the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is man's duty to live for others, and his charities must be applied without any distinction of persons. Charity in Islam brings man nearer to God. Charity and the giving of alms have been made obligatory, and every person who possesses property above a certain limit has to pay a tax, levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor.